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ABSTRACT

Rural conditions influence the implementation and effect of vocational education policies dealing with funding, accessibility, economics, and local values. By law funding formulas must consider two criteria: relative district wealth, often determined by property values, which have a low correlation to median family income; and concentration of low-income families, which depends on the number applying for aid at often inaccessible rural agencies or on historically underestimated rural unemployment rates. Inaccessibility and transportation problems can limit participation dispersed populations. Rural vocational education may not provide diversified skill training to offset rural underemployment or skills essential for rural living, such as auto repair. Rural conservatism and values may block implementation of nontraditional federal policy, such as women's education. Self-employment, self-reliance, and wide-ranging skills are rural values which run counter to those implied by imposed schedules and industrial specialization. (SB)

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RURAL VOC'S FOR RURAL FOLKS: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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May 21, 1979

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INTRODUCTION

Approximately one quarter of all the public high school graduates in America complete a program of study in vocational education designed specifically to equip them with marketable occupational skills. Just who is taught what skills, toward what ends, and at who's cost is the crux of vocational education policy. (The "how" is still left to the teacher). Education remains, of course, a State and local responsibility, but to the degree that the federal government helps support vocational education (to the tune of two thirds of a billion dollars last year) federal priorities can be imposed on State and local programs. The instrument of federal policy is the Vocational Education Act of 1963, as amended in 1968 and again in 1976.

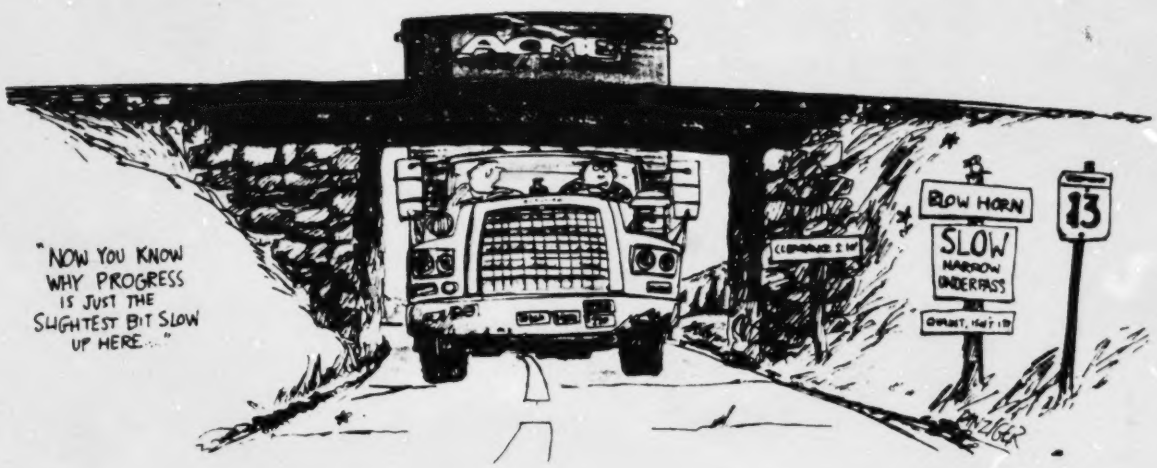
Federal policies continually change to meet new social demands and to correspond to new national priorities, and vocational education policy is no exception. Early twentieth century vocational education policy, for example, was principally an incentive for program expansion and to legitimate vocational education as a public school curricular alternative to the classical academic program. In contrast, current policy for vocational education is increasingly a social policy directed toward compensating for individual deficiencies and special needs and achieving equity. But even within the context of equity and special needs, priorities shift depending on what definition of equity is in vogue and what special needs are currently popular.

Current thinking dictates that the needs requiring attention are those that are based on the ascriptive characteristics of the individual and on economic characteristics of the community. Handicaps, limited English speaking ability, economic and educational disadvantage and high unemployment rates are called "national priorities." But there are other demographic characteristics attributable to size that affect the identification of need, the means of providing services, and even the goals of the programs. These "urban-rural" differences are not given attention: they are thought to represent local "tastes" rather than "needs." Thus in the formulation of policy suburban neighborhoods are treated much the same as rural villages, agricultural areas are treated the same as eastern industrial centers and southern rural towns are treated the same as Maine coastal villages.

The remainder of this paper will be devoted to exploring how rural conditions might affect vocational education policy. I will summarize the Vocational Education Act, briefly expand on some of the major issues facing rural vocational educators and communities, both of equity and of relevance, and point out some of potential problem areas that might be either unique to rural areas or exaggerated by rural characteristics. The discussion will include examples of contemporary situations to more graphically depict the issues.

The discussion will include not only the impact of ruralness on schools and students, but on the community. The vocational education issues in rural districts are not simply educational: they are also

economic. Schools have a responsibility not only to the development of the individual but to the development of the community. The degree to which vocational education programs mesh with local labor markets and the role that vocational education plays in the economic growth of the area bear directly on the health of the community and the region. Federal policy has not yet turned its attention to the relationship between education and local development which also has distinctive characteristics in rural locations.



HISTORICAL NOTES

Federal support for vocaticnal education was the first successful intervention by the government in public secondary education. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 authorized $7.2 million for vocational education and to solidify its role, the government enacted the authorization "in perpetuity." As with subsequent federal programs, the effects were expected to greatly exceed the government's expenditures.

The stories of just how the Act came to be and toward what goals are as varied as the politics of its authors. Conventional historians argue that vocational education contributed to the democratization of education by providing expanded opportunities to the less academically-inclined and reflected the progressive's desire to integrate manual and intellectual skills.[1] Revisionist historians accuse vocational education of tracking in order to maintain class distinctions in the face of the approaching universal secondary education and to feed the new and growing industrial machine.[2] Regardless of political perspective, education historians highlight the influence of business on the emergence of vocational education. The National Association of Manufacturers and the newly-formed National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education were major forces behind the bill and the German industrial-training complex was pointed to as a model for vocational training.[3] The economy was expanding rapidly and much of the new demand for labor was in the northern cities.

There was another side to the story, however, not so strongly emphasized. America, at the turn of the century, was still predominately agricultural and farm organizations such as the Grange were also lobbying heavily for the bill. The Smith-Hughes Act, after all, was preceded by the Smith-Lever Act which provided for agricultural extension programs. Vocational education, then, was not only a response to occupational needs of industry but to the demands of rural educators struggling to make rural education more relevant to the rural experience. In 1909, Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life requested from the Congress "a new kind of school in the country, which shall teach the children as much outdoors as indoors and not, as present, mainly for life in town!"[4] Vocational education, however optimistic, was expected to slow the migration of the more schooled youth to the cities. In the end, the farm lobbies were effective and half of the funds from the Smith-Hughes Act were directed toward agricultural programs. The other half was split between home economics (another rural-oriented program) and trade and industrial programs.

Subsequent Vocational Education Acts (in 1929, 1934, 1936 and 1946) served to increase the level of funding and to designate other programs as eligible for support. Agricultural programs, however, continued to get the lion's share of the funds. The money was used, for the most part, to encourage program expansion and to require more extensive State level planning for vocational education. Like much of early government funding (both State and Federal) for education, small amounts of money were used as a wedge to shift the locus of

control from local to State and Federal goals. More elaborate reporting and planning systems and concomitant requirements for compliance almost always accompanied increased funds.

Despite the fact that the agricultural programs were so strongly emphacized in early vocational education programs, the effects were counterintuitive. Rural educators failed to anticipate the reaction of rural youth and instead of keeping them satisfied and "down on the farm" education continued glorify urbanization and to encourage out-migration. Job opportunities were expanding much more rapidly in the cities and no resurgence of agricultural education could stem the flow.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 represented a dramatic shift in federal policy. Rather than funding programs, the new Act focused the resources directly on achieving equity. Although still free to control the utilization of the funds, States were required to spend specific amounts on designated target populations. Between 1963 and 1976, the targeted funds increased considerable. Moreover, the subsequent Amendments, in 1968 and 1976, attempted to make the programs more relevent to new and emerging indistries--in contrast with earlier policies which were content to sustain much of what existed.

THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT OF 1963

The Vocational Education Act, as amended through 1976 (Public Law 94-482), distributed $642 million to the States in 1978 to, among other things, "expand, improve and, where necessary, maintain" programs of vocational education. The 1976 amendments made the use of the funds both more flexible but, at the same time, more prescriptive--an apparent contradiction. But in keeping with the Administration's policy to encourage funding through block grants, many of the categorical grants in the old law were merged, and the States were each asked to develop a plan for distribution to the LEAs. At the same time, the new law prescribes the criteria by thich States have to distribute their federal funds.

The 80% of the States' share that comprises the basic grant ($430 million) must be allocated

with special attention to
- -areas with high rates of unemployment
- -depressed areas

giving principle attention to
- -relative wealth of the district
- -concentration of low-income families in the district

and, furthermore, at least
- -20% must go to pay 50% of the costs of educating the disadvantaged and limited English-speaking
- -10% must go to pay 50% of the costs of educating the handicapped
- -15% must go to post-secondary and adult programs

In addition the programs must demonstrate (in their plans) efforts to reduce sex role stereotyping and to enroll men and women in non-traditional occupational programs.

The remainder of the States' allotment ($107 million) is discretionary money to be used for program improvement and supportive services. Programs specifically mentioned in the law include research, innovative programs, curriculum development, personnel training, guidance and counseling, and grants to assist in overcoming sex bias.

The federal money from the Vocational Education Act makes up only 10% of the national vocational education budget--and the proportion has been decreasing in recent years. If inflation continues and the federal budget remains constant, the ability of federal money to actually influence local policy may be weakened considerably. Some recipients, especially in the small schools where the absolute number of dollars is already quite low, are reevaluating the advantages of federal money against the requirements imposed. Lacking the administrative staff of large systems, small districts cannot absorb the added paperwork. In Wisconsin this year, either because of unwillingness to hire the required local vocational education coordinator or because their programs were deemed antiquated, 39 schools chose to give up their federal funds.

The government does allow some leeway in State policy. The law "gives" the States the responsibility for implementing the Act according to the intent of the Congress, but to insure that its will is in fact being carried out, the Act explicitly prescribes an elaborate planning process. The process includes federal approval of a five year plan and annual plans, mandatory State and local advisory councils and an evaluation procedure.

Even the makeup of the State Advisory Council is mandated. To ensure meeting some rural needs, it is directed to include a representative of agricultural familiar with its needs and problems in the State. The law also requires occupational planning in cooperation with the Department of Labor through mandated State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees (SOICCs). The State plan must describe in detail just how the State will distribute its federal and matching State money, how the districts will use the money, and how compliance will be achieved, particularly in terms of equal access. They have to demonstrate coordination of efforts within their State and plans for local participation in the planning process.

During the five year period in which the State plan is in effect, the States are required to evaluate the effectiveness of each federally-funded program. The criteria specified in the Act are employment in occupations related to the individual's training and the number considered by their employers to be well trained. The regulations further expand upon the Act suggesting other, more traditional, education criteria such as quality of instruction, class size, and criterion-referenced tests. Only data on the two criteria in the Act, however, are collected by the Bureau.

There is still the question of who is actually being served by vocational education. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports 9 million vocational education students among the 14+ million secondary students are enrolled in federally-funded programs.[5]

Surveys based on student self-reports, incontrast, indicate that about 20-25% of the students perceive of themselves as vocational students. No data are reported disaggregated by place of residence. With centralized area vocational centers drawing students both from urban and from rural communities, distinctions become obfuscated and it is even more difficult to classify districts for vocational education students than for the non-vocational education students. For analytical purposes, area vocational centers may be more similar to community colleges than to comprehensive high schools.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND RURAL CONDITIONS

There is virtually no mention in the Vocational Education Act of specific rural or urban needs: assumptions of homogeneity underscore most of the provisions of the Act. The Congress (and the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education with the regulations that accompany the law) have established procedures to implement policies with no recognition of demographic differences related to size among receipient agencies. This can clearly result in inequities in atypical communities. A community, for instance, might be too isolated for easy access to an area vocational center; it may have too low a concentration of handicapped students to pay for special equipment; or it may be a poor agricultural community with low-paid, underemployed farmers who do not happen to qualify for the unemployment ranks. Any set of factors chosen to distribute resources and thereby implement policy will, of course, favor

some people over others, but it is important to be aware of unanticipated circumstances. There are rural conditions, or circumstances, that influence the ways in which policies are implemented and the effect they have. Some of those policies have to do with (1) funding patterns and financial needs; (2) access and services; (3) local values and economics circumstances.

The Formula. . . .

The ways in which federal and State vocational education funds are distributed is the first place school boards focus their attention. If any community does not have adequate services, it often blames that on not receiving enough federal or State aid. Each of the principal criteria by which the States are required to allocate Federal and matching State funds do have associated measurement problems. The two criteria specified by law to be given primary consideration are the relative wealth of the district and the concentration of low income families. The regulations established by the Office of Education are even more prescriptive, requiring a "formula" distribution and interpreting wealth either as property wealth per capita or tax effort. But because property values are readily available, and tax effort is not, the Office of Education has required the former. Yet study after study has shown a low correlation between property wealth and median family income. Furthermore, it seems to have a suburban and urban bias. Simulations of four [illegible] by the Education Commission of the States showed that, in three of four States examined, nonmetropolitan districts had higher average equalized property values per capital but lower median family incomes than either

"NOW THE CONCEPT HERE IS POTENTIAL!
THEY WANT 30 BALLOONS FOR THIS OLD CHARMER,
BUT YOU ADD ABOUT 10 LANG ONES FOR FIX-UP AND
COSMETOLOGY AND YOU HAVE A "RESTORED CLASSIC
MINIFARM, WIDE BOARD FLOORS + SMALL PANE WINDOWS,
WHICH YOU CAN BARNUM TO THE NEXT PILGRIM FOR
FIFTY SLAP SHOTS NO SWEAT!
THEN WE CONDO CITY FOR THE GOOD LIFE..."

suburban or city districts.[6] Rural property values, particularly in the east, have been inflated in anticipation of the migration of both people and industry out of the cities. The other criterion-concentration of low-income families--is dependent upon persons applying for some form of State or federal assistance. Since offices are less accessible in rural areas, undercounts often result.

Another designated criterion, unemployment rate, is historically underestimated in rural areas. High proportions of self-employed, high incidence of underemployment (or farmers needing second jobs for subsistence) and dropping out of the job market because of more complete

knowledge of the local job market (and knowing that there are no jobs available) are all causes of undercounts.[7]

The Act actually is not as prescriptive as BOAE's interpretation seems to suggest. Prior to dictating the criteria mentioned it demands "distribution on economic, social and demographic factors relating to the need for vocational education . . ." This opens the door to States to consider other factors, however the government's preoccupation with property wealth and economic factors have precluded any significant shifts in allocations due to other social or demographic factors.

An example of a measurement problem was reported in Gadsden County, Florida, last year.[8] In this rural county of 40,000, the primary industry is shade tobacco, typically used to wrap cigars. As the industry declined and people were put out of work the unemployment rate remained relatively low--9.2%. Suspicious that this was grossly understated, an independent survey was requested which subsequently showed that the actual rate was over 26%. The problem was in the fact that the workers had not been eligible for unemployment compensation--the measure used for unemployment rates.

Given the definitional problems associated with formula funding, it is not surprising that some districts will claim they are underfunded. Since the '76 Amendments required new formulas, shifts in funds were

bound to occur. It appears that in many States (e.g. California, New York, Massachusetts) the shift was generally from rural to urban districts. Hold harmless clauses by themselves will not appease districts if they see neighboring districts receiving increased funding. One result was a formal protest in the State of California by the Assembly's Rural Caucus. A spokesman was quoted in the Oakland Tribune last fall with the charge that "The poor kinds out there in the rural areas are being hurt again."[9] The protest resulted in a study by the Auditor's General's Office last winter that found, among other things, that[9]

> Large districts, with high numbers of students in grades 9 through 12, received substantially more VEA funds than did small districts in 1978-79.

That, in itself, of course does not represent lack of fairness. Unless more is known about the distribution of bilingual, disadvantaged and handicapped in the districts, pure numbers do not tell the entire story. Distribution in relation to all of the criteria in the Act was not analyzed (or at least not reported). The study did, however, result in a reexamination of the formula by the State Department of Education and in May, 1979, the Department announced it would raise it formula for the 1979-80 school year!

This story describes the possible plight of rural districts--if, in fact, the formula is biased. It also demonstrated, however, the strength of rural interests in the State legislature. California, with only 9% of the population classified as rural, still gives strong

weight to the vocational agriculture constituents, who were the power behind this revolt.

. . . and Economics of Scale

Funds are distributed by States to the LEAs either on the basis of direct applications or counts of some attribute of the population served. The use of counts to drive formulas assumes that all of the costs associated with vocational education are linearly related to the number of students enrolled. Yet any accountant recognizes that for a specific size range of schools there are different categories of cost which include variable costs (such as supplies and insurance), semi-fixed costs (such as instruction and transportation) and fixed costs (such as plant and administration). An example of the last is a school of 300 with one principal. If that principal can administer a school of 600 the per pupil costs are reduced by 50%. A semi-fixed cost, on the other hand, changes by fixed increments. An increase in class size from 20 to 25 may not require an added teacher but an increase from 20 to 35 may. (Fixed costs, of course, are only valid up to the capacity of the facility.)

Economies of scale have been brought to bear in the past in order to convince people of the merits of consolidation. Although many of the claims of savings are exaggerated, unit cost differentials do exist. In fact they may be even more significant in vocational education where: (1) the capital costs (e.g. equipment) are higher than for non-

vocational centers are used part-time; and (3) the costs of providing special services to vocational education students requires a reasonable concentration of special needs students.

Equipment costs are particularly troublesome for vocational education trying to expand the range of programs available. Since equipment tends to be costly, it requires some minimum enrollment level to justify the investment. Small enrollments may not reach the critical mass necessary to capitalize a given expenditure or to support an instructor capable of highly specialized instruction. Therefore even funding that is "fair" in terms of per pupil allotments may not give the rural vocational education student opportunities equivalent to students in more populated areas.

Irrespective of the social and educative benefits associated with small size, small units must be prepared to pay more per pupil for the same resources. The task force on rural community colleges of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges declared that[11]

> Equity in funding as a means of equalizing educational opportunity among the organizational units in any States system of public and community colleges depends upon the inclusion of some means, mathematical or other, of allowing for the higher costs of operating per unit within the smaller, rural community college.

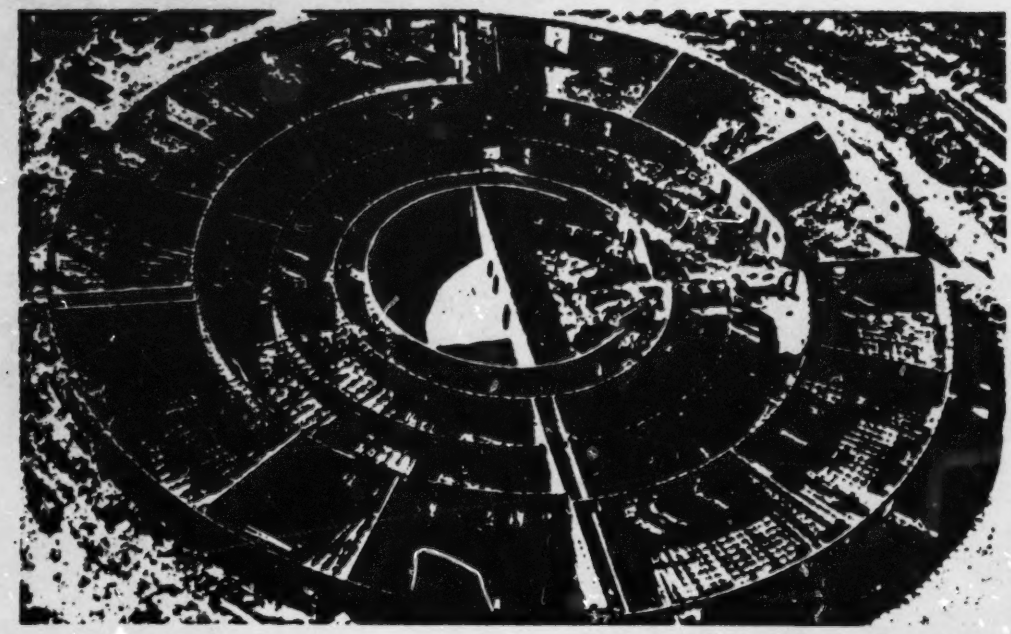
The Vocational Education Act makes no such adjustments for scale.

Not only are diseconomies of scale rarely considered in federal policy but small schools are even denied as legitimate vocational institutions. Many State and federal programs require five or more programs for eligibility. Furthermore, many federally funded studies of vocational education survey only schools with five or more programs, biasing the results. In Nebraska, for instance, this results in missing 160 of 210 high schools that do offer vocational education. A 1976 House Committee reported that 46% of rural students do not have access to schools with five or more programs.[12]

Diseconomies of scale can, in some instances, deter the use of the authorized setaside funds for target populations. The Act mandates State and local matching of all of the excess costs, a requirement which many State and local matching of all of the excess costs, a requirement which many State and local agencies already perceive as a financial hardship. Since the excess costs of providing special services tend to be much higher in sparsely-populated areas, it is more cost-effective and simpler to just to direct the setasides to districts that require a lower matching effort.

Accessibility . . .

Despite attempts to find innovative ways to provide services to dispersed populations, the ultimate solution has, in most instances, been consolidation of programs into area vocational center. (See Figure 1) Spurred by hundreds of million of dollars for facilities construction



Aerial photo by the Northern Neck News

Bringing Them All Together

Here's a special view of Virginia's newest rising vocational center—which has more local school divisions joined in its promise than any other in the state so far. It's the 520-student Northern Neck Regional Vocational Center at Warsaw. Partners in the venture are Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland Counties and the town of Colonial Beach. They'll all be sending students there when it opens next fall with 13 skill area programs designed to suit their area, which is oriented towards farming, fishing and forestry. The $3 million center is being built with federal Economic Development Administration and Vocational Education Act funds on a site purchased jointly by the localities. It incorporates classrooms and administrative offices in the inner circle ring; student locker rooms, storage areas and teacher offices in the middle circle area, and shop areas around the rim—with every laboratory completely self-contained. The view is extra special because, besides looking down from an airplane, you'll never be able to see the inside whole like this again. The center has gone under roof since this photo was taken last November.

FIGURE 1

from the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Economic Development Administration over the past ten years, area centers have sprung up throughout the south. Consolidated vocational centers no doubt can be quite successful in rural areas with communities in close proximity to each other and with adequate roads. Distance and travel time, however, may discourage participation of students on the periphery of the service area and raise the cost and time commitments of those who do enroll. As a result the final location of school becomes hotly contested among the participating districts and towns that lose out sometimes support the school only grudgingly.

Alternatives to area vocational centers have been explored. There is, in fact, a subsection of the legislation (132(a)(2)) to support exemplary and innovative programs including

> programs designed to develop training opportunities for persons in sparsely populated rural areas and for individuals migrating from farms to urban areas.

The NIE study should show how much the States actually appropriated for this purpose and to what districts.

There are some interesting alternatives already in existence around the country, including residential programs in Oregon, mobile classrooms in Alabama and satellite programs in serving high schools, in Maine. All have special costs, however, that cannot always be addressed by uniform policies.

At the present, three poor rural Missouri counties in the Ozarks are searching for a way to provide more comprehensive vocational education. The districts and towns are too far apart for a suitable central location and therefore an area vocational center has been rejected. The counties are "wealthy" according to property values which reflects the assessed value of land owned by mining industries, but are below average in median income. In one county, in fact, one of three families exists below poverty level. As a result they do not qualify for much State aid. With the help of the Missouri State Department of Education the counties are searching for alternative means to share resources.

One of the reasons that there is not more concern with rural facilities to do with limitations on data that are reported. A recent national survey of all vocational education facilities by Westat, Inc.[13] (funded by OE) showed that cities have 23% of the population but only 11% of the vocational education station while towns between 0 and 25,000 have 24% of the population but 35% of the available stations. On the surface this appears to be a surfeit of opportunities. Yet a closer look shows that rural area vocational education stations are only 42% utilized and regional schools are only 69% utilized. Single district comprehensive high schools, on the other hand, show an 89% station utilization. This suggests that access might be problematic despite the availability of facilities. Furthermore, at the post-secondary level rural areas have only 7% of the stations for 24% of the population.

It appears that the post-secondary system has not yet made its way into the country. (This survey was also restricted to schools with five or more programs, thus missing the small rural schools.)

. . . and Programs

The evaluation procedures described in the Act discourage schools in rural areas from meeting many real, but secondary, vocational needs. The goal specified-employment in the occupation for which the student is being trained-disregards many characteristics of rural economies. If, for example, family farms are legitimate sources of supplementary (but in-kind) income, and supported as such in the States's economic development plan (as they are in Vermont) then agricultural education could also be a recognized vocational skill. The high incidence of underemployment in rural areas creates a need for occupational skills other than the principal source of income. Skills that are considered "hobbies" in urban areas--such as auto repair--are not hobbies when there is no public transportation available and a vehicle is necessary for work. John Dewey, who believed strongly that practical education for work was essential would have cringed at our narrow perception of vocational education. "We must avoid," he said, "the limitation of conception of vocation to the occupation where immediately tangible commodities are produced . . ."

Somewhat different policies could allow vocational education systems in rural areas more flexibility to provide supplementary that earn only in-kind income yet skills needed for rural survival and secondary skills for increased occupational mobility. Arguing for diversified skill training, Dewey said "nothing could be more absurd than to try to educate individuals with an eye to only one line of activity." [15]

Rural Values and Attitudes . .

It is beyond the scope of this paper to delve very far into rural values and attitudes, yet it is important to note that there are distinctions, in order to understand the problems of implementation of vocational education policy. Despite the exitence of mass transportation and the media, many sociologists still find that urban-rural differences are very real.

The currently popular image of rural "Gemeinschaft" nostalgically idealizes the intimacy, stability and informality. This can be viewed as a respite from the hectic pace and alienation of urban life, but it can also be the parochialism satirized by Sinclair Lewis in "Main Street." Attitude polls and voting patterns, for example, indicate a basic conservatism and adherance to traditional values that has displaced much of the historical rural populism.

The social fabric of the rural community is much stronger than that of the city and those deviating from norms set for the community cannot escape into obscurity as they might in a city. Thus the school, which is the most important institution in many small towns, must be more attuned to the values of the community and these can be a roadblock to the implementation of federal policies.

One way in which this conservatism play itself out in rural areas could be counterproductive for policies that are "non-traditional" - for example, those concerning the role of women. Farm wives historically have been essential (but non-paid) workers in an agricultural economy. The role of the homemaker is often considered vital to sustaining family and community stability any anything that detracts from this role is suspect. My own observations in rural schools indicate a reluctance to change. Even though farm women work in the fields and drive tractors, there are informal prohibitions when it comes to women entering non-traditional paid occupations.

Furthermore even when programs are accessible, rural women raising children may need daycare and transportation in order to enroll. The necessary support services, such as public transportation, child care and counseling, are less often available in sparsely populated areas. All of these things, along with the fact that many small rural schools accept no federal funds, could constrain significant female participation in non-traditional programs.[17] The dispersion and size of many rural schools certainly makes monitoring for compliance difficult.

. . .and the Rural Workplace

Rural values are also incorporated into the structure of the workplace and into work habits. If it is presumed that work habits and the economic structure of agricultural society are different from industrial society, then one can infer certain urban-rural differences as well. In many respects, rural areas, heavily dependent on external capital, have characteristics similar to those of developing countries, including inadequate housing, unemployment, under--employment and proverty. Much of rural life is not as idyllic as Grandma Moses once painted it.

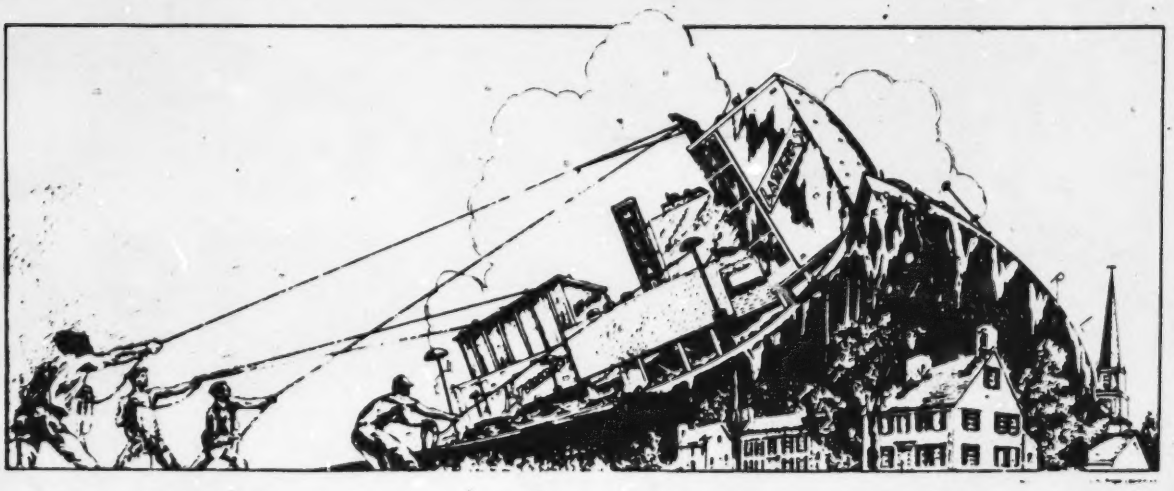
Although no longer predominantly agricultural, rural communities are still highly dependent on agriculture-related industries and thus retain many of the traditions of their agricultural roots. Yet agricultural alone can no longer support the 60 million people in rural America. Family farms must provide important supplementary income for the under-employed and the food processing and marketing industries provide jobs to supplement farms jobs. There is also a greater tendency in rural areas toward self-reliance and, consequently, toward self-employment. Some rural States support crafts as legitimate occupation and cooperatives as means for providing small businesses with some of the benefits of larger size.

Some of the work habits in rural parts of the country--particularly among farmers and the self-employed--have to do with attitudes toward time. Farm life has always operated on a natural cycle governed by the sun, the seasons and the weather--not an electric time clock. The agricultural worker and the small businessman are more independent, used to fashioning their own work schedule rather than laboring under a schedule and under rules set down by others. There is a need for a wider range of skills in the country, contrary to the trend in industry toward more and more specialization. These all have implications for the way in which vocational education is used not only to provide the needed skills, but to inculcate the "right" habits.

At the same time that these traditional nostalgic rural values are being coveted and bolstered by the "small is beautiful" and "and back to the land" movement, a counter-trend is appearing. Fortunately (or unfortunately depending on your view) American business has discovered

the potential profits in rural areas. Industry is flocking to the country with new plants or to relocate existing plants. A new business in a dying (or slowly deteriorating) rural community can save that town and create enough new jobs to turn the town around. New plants have, in fact, saved many rural communities in recent years, especially in the south which, with the aid of the Appalachian Regional Commission is being revitalized. Yet the benefits do not always measure up to the promises.[18] Recent studies have shown that, as in developing countries, much of the top management and many highly skilled employees are brought in from outside and most of the profits leave the community and even the region.[19] Towns grow dependent on businesses that have no real roots in the community. Commitment is a function of profits and those profits, in labor-intensive industries are highly dependent on low wages. Thus unionization, or significant improvement in wages has the effect of driving businesses to where lower-cost labor is available.

A4 BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE April 22 1979



This does not negate the positive value of the new indistrialization. Plants do bring in more money, community services, improvements, and increased tax base (unless it has been bargained away in return for the business) and more work. The role that vocational education plays in attracting and retaining industry needs to be examined in the light of other incentives such as tax write-offs, energy costs, and traits of the available labor force. Strong, flexible vocational programs are used by the States and towns to draw industry by promising a continuing supply of workers trained specifically for the new jobs with the costs assumed by the State. Texas, for instance, claims that it can save a new business up to $2000 for every new employee through State-supported vocational education. Kentucky advertises a vocational education center within 25 miles of every plant in the State. Alabama brings classrooms right to the plant with mobile units. Vocational education and CETA work together to help new businesses get started by subsidizing the training costs and even some of the first year's labor costs.

Links between development and vocational education in the simpler economic system of the rural district are important and often quite visible. The Vermont State Plan for Economic Development states as a strategy[20]

> involve local development and economic planning groups and indistry in local vocational advisory groups and adult on-the-job training programs.

The Governor of West Virginia, John D. Rockefeller said[21]

> The program of vocational education has proved to be a vital link in the chain of economic development in West Virginia

Rural communities, because of their scale, can provide laboratories in which to study the relationship between vocational education and local development and the long-term impact of vocational education on participants. One can also examine how the rural, agricultural-based work habits are either modifying or being modified by indistrial work habits. The contrast between the traditional, rural workplace and the new, imported industries creates dilemmas for rural people who want to retain their values yet improve their lot economically. Rural schools are, in part, responsible for imparting values and are thus caught between the new and the old.

"SEE WE JUST MOVED HERE AND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR IS LIKE A SMALL PLACE IN A SMALL TOWN, BUT NOT TOO SMALL, WITH A VIEW AND LAND 'CAUSE MARK IS REALLY INTO THE EARTH, HE'S A MUSICIAN, BUT WITH SOME PEOPLE, NOT TOO MANY CAUSE I, Y'KNOW, I LIKE TO GO AROUND IN SUMMER IN THE OLD BUFFO, Y'KNOW, AND WE WANT A SOUTHERN EXPOSURE 'CAUSE MAREK IS TOTALLY SOLAR, AND A BARN 'CAUSE I'M INTO ANIMALS, I JUST LOVE GOATS, AND A POND, AND A LOT OF BEDROOMS 'CAUSE I REALLY WANT TO HAVE LOTS OF BABIES, Y'KNOW, AND WE CAN'T GO MORE THAN ABOUT $35,000 CAUSE WE STILL GOTTA GET JOBS AND MAREK MAY REMAIN INTO WHERE THIS SUMMER JOB

CONCLUSIONS

The Vocational Education Study,[22] underway at the National Institute of Education, is making a start toward learning more about how the vocational education enterprise behaves in rural settings.

The study, due to be transmitted to the Congress in September 1981, was mandated in Section 523 of the Education Amendments of 1976. (Public Law 94-482) The Act charged the Institute with conducting "a thorough evaluation and study of vocational education programs, including such programs conducted by the States, and such programs conducted under the Vocational Education Act of 1963, and other related programs conducted under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1963, and by the State Post-Secondary Commission authorized by the Education Amendments of 1972."[7] The study must include:

- a study of the distribution of vocational education funds in terms of services, occupations, target populations, enrollments, and education and governmental levels and what such distribution should be in order to meet the greatest human resource needs for the next ten years;
- an examination of how to achieve compliance with, and inforecement of, the provisions of applicable laws of the United States;
- an analysis of the means of assessing program quality and effectiveness; and
- a review and evaluation of programs funded under the "Consumer and Homemaking Education" provisions of the law.

Each of the individual studies will include a rural sample. The distribution of funds, to rural areas, compliance in rural areas, evaluation in rural areas, how special need populations are treated in rural areas and the effects of vocational education in rural areas are each subjects of current studies. Thus Vocational Education Act is up for reauthorization in 1982 and by then all of the results will be in. Any new legislation will be drawn with, at least, the full knowledge of possible urban-rural distinctions.

FOOTNOTES

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Note: Cartoons on pages 3, 12 and 27 are by Jeff Danzinger of the Montpelier (Vermont) Time-Argus.